

HIST 133C: BOOK ESSAY ASSIGNMENT

Proposal with reviews (due Oct. 16--week 3½)

- §1. **What should I write about? How do I find an appropriate book?**
- Think about ~~the Holocaust~~ Germany after 1945--what interests you about it? Look through the readings and textbook for ideas. Once you've thought of some topics, look through the list on the Suggested Books for Essay page on the course website, and pick a book. If you can't find one you like:
 - Go to the library and browse the shelves: DD2256.5-DD259 are the main relevant call numbers, on the 4th floor of the UCSB library.
 - Search amazon.com for keywords; following the "recommendations" and "also bought" links leads to more titles.
 - If you have trouble thinking of a topic, or finding a book for a topic, please come to talk to me—sooner, not later!
- §2. **What kind of books are suitable?** I would prefer that you select **academic/scholarly works** of history, and not anthologies (collections of essays) or fiction (novels), although I sometimes make exceptions. Most **memoirs, diaries** and **biographies** are fine as well.
- §3. **What should my proposal look like?** The purpose of the proposal is to find a suitable book on your topic of interest. It has three main elements [plus published reviews]:
1. a *descriptive title* that indicates the main theme you are interested in.
 2. a *short description and explanation* of your topic, including an explicit *list of questions* that you want to find out about and hope the book will address.
 3. *Full bibliographic information* on this **and perhaps other books** that you think may be suitable, including the **publisher** and **number of pages**, as well as the library call number or other information on the availability of the book. (Do you have a copy, or how and when will you get one?)
 4. *Published reviews of the book.*
 - You should attach printouts or photocopies of 2-3 reviews of your proposed book, at least one of which should be from a scholarly journal (which may be available on the internet, but you may have to photocopy it from a journal in the library; the others can be from other internet sources).
 - For each review **you must give full bibliographic information** (author, journal title, date, page numbers; and, if from the web, also the URL or website). A URL alone is *not* enough.
 - For books published since 1987, reviews in scholarly journals are often listed in the *Academic Search Complete*, accessible from the UCSB domain, through the library's homepage (Research, Article Databases). However, the actual review text is often not available on-line, so you will have to get that journal from the stacks and photocopy the review.
 - If you need help finding reviews, ask a reference librarian for help, or see me.

Book essay (due Nov. 13--week 7)

- §4. Once your proposal has been approved, you should
- Read the book, taking notes about its main argument (the author's thesis--can you find a thesis statement?), the sources s/he uses in each chapter, and how the book is structured..
 - Write a short **introduction** about the main question(s) your book addresses, and the answers it offers. Be sure to mention what sources the author draws from. This is the place for **your thesis statement** assessing the author's main argument or point (i.e. the author's thesis).
 - In the **main body** of your essay you should integrate a description with a discussion of how convincingly the book makes that argument. Conclude with a suggestion about the book's potential audience.
 - Please **resubmit your proposal** when you submit your book essay--attached in front of it.

(cont'd on back)

§5. **Content/Grading.** When I grade, I look for five things.

1. *First*, a *thesis statement* tells me the goal of the book, what it is trying to argue or explain. The thesis can also be about insights or inferences that you draw from the book. Mark it with boldface type.
2. *Second*, I look for an *argument* supporting that thesis.
3. *Third*, I look for concrete *evidence*—specific cases or examples—used to support that argument. A paper with any two of these three is a "C;" all three elements earn a "B."
4. *Fourth*, I look to see whether *counterevidence* is discussed—whether you refute evidence that supports a thesis different or contradictory to the author's. If elements one, two and three are also present, this would bring a paper into the "A" range.
5. *Finally*, I look to see whether a paper is *carefully written* and proofread, and has clear organization or perhaps even stylistic grace. This can lift a paper up to a "+" or, with two or more typos/errors per page, drop it down to a "-."

§6. **Length.** Your essay should be at least 1800 words—6-7 double-spaced, typed pages, with 1½x1x1" margins and 12 point, proportional space font. In Microsoft Word, select the body text of your paper. Use Tools > Word Count, and insert the resulting number after your name at the top of your paper.

Number the pages! By hand is ok if you are word-processor challenged. Otherwise one point off!

§7. **Due dates.** Late submissions will be penalized one point per day, beginning at 2:00pm.

§8. **Grading.** The book essay counts for **20%** of your final grade (30% with the proposal and corrected version). It is worth taking seriously!

Any submitted work that is not proofread or does not have numbered pages will be reduced by one point.

§9. This course fulfills the **general education writing requirement**. If you do not submit all parts of the book essay assignment, you cannot receive credit for this course (i.e., you will fail).

§10. **Plagiarism**—presenting someone else's work as your own, or deliberately failing to credit or attribute the work of others on whom you draw (including materials found on the web)—is a serious academic offense, punishable by dismissal from the university. It hurts the one who commits it most of all, by cheating them out of an education. I will report offenses to the appropriate university authorities for disciplinary action.

Revised version (due Nov. 25)

§11. I will return your paper with comments and corrections. You should correct the items noted, both marking the hard copy and describing on a separate sheet (attach it to the front) how you would change your essay to improve it along the lines I suggest. Include rewritten paragraphs as necessary.

If I have suggested extensive revisions, you may need more than one sheet, or even a fresh printout.

§12. Note that if you earn a B+ grade or better, you may opt for web publication instead of a final exam.

